

We believe we must screen and support migrants in Europe and the Middle East. Europe is facing an unprecedented number of migrants landing on their shores, almost 1 million this year. Their screening systems have been overwhelmed by the large number of migrants. Our bill would respond to Europeans' request to provide them with technical assistance to screen migrants and improve their own border security and our security as well.

In the Middle East, the Democrats' plan will help Jordan, a strong U.S. ally at the forefront of the migrant crisis. Four million people are displaced in the region, creating instability in Jordan, our ally, and also harming the neighboring countries. Democrats' legislation includes a new stabilization fund for Jordan and Lebanon, helping those fleeing the conflict in Syria stay in the region, closer to home.

These are just a few of the components of our plan to degrade and destroy ISIS, but we are equally committed to thwarting terrorism here at home. The Democratic plan would close the terrorist's gun loophole.

As of today, there is a legal loophole that prevents law enforcement from verifying that potential gun buyers are not FBI terror suspects. That means if a person has pledged allegiance to ISIS online and is barred from flying due to the threat they pose, that man or woman can still walk into any gunshop and purchase weapons and ammunition. They can do that today, right now. That is wrong.

Last Thursday Democrats tried to pass legislation to give law enforcement the tools needed to prevent the sale of guns to suspected terrorists. Republicans blocked our commonsense measure. We are not finished. We will bring this vote to the floor as often as we can. That is the way it should be.

We need to strengthen the Visa Waiver Program. It was amazing to see the Republicans running for President waffle and weasel out of why someone who is on a flight-risk status, someone who cannot fly, should be able to buy a gun. It was interesting to see on the Sunday shows the Republicans waffle and weasel through answers on this subject.

We need to strengthen the Visa Waiver Program so ISIS fighters cannot access the program and travel to our country. This includes requiring visa waiver travelers to use machine-readable passports, requiring information sharing rules with visa waiver countries and requiring visa waiver countries to enter into agreements regarding the air marshal program and to comply with U.S. aviation and airport security standards.

We must improve aviation security. We must work to secure our airports. We saw all the news when ISIS brought down a Russian plane with hundreds of passengers aboard.

A recent report from the Homeland Security inspector general found that 73 workers with access to secure areas in airports had links to terrorism—

stunning. Our legislation authorizes new vetting for aviation workers and new security measures for the most important areas of our airports.

We must lock down radiological materials to stop a dirty bomb. With both ISIS and Al Qaeda saying they want to get their hands on weapons of mass destruction, it is disturbing that there are 2,300 sites around the United States with radiological material. Our legislation requires a new plan for locking down those materials at the places where they are held, such as universities and hospitals, so we can reduce the threat of a dirty bomb.

Our legislation is concerned—and we are going to do everything we can—with preventing homegrown terrorists by creating an office within the Department of Homeland Security tasked with countering extremism.

We must address encryption by directing the National Academy of Sciences, the intelligence community, and the private sector to work together to identify new encryption technology and how it is used to make sure that our national security needs and technology policies are not working at cross purposes.

Finally, Senate Democrats are proposing legislation to provide law enforcement agencies with grant money to help prepare for active shooter situations. We know how critical first responders are to containing and ending active shooter attacks. So we should ensure they have all the tools necessary.

This is the plan that we, Senate Democrats, are putting forward. It is comprehensive. It addresses international and domestic concerns. The consequences of inaction are too grave for us to waste time seeking political gain.

The security of our Nation and the decimation of ISIS depend on the steps we take now. So I hope Republicans will join us to implement these logical reforms that place the security of Americans first and address the threat of ISIS around the world.

Mr. President, I see no one on the floor wishing to speak.

Would the Chair announce the program for the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FAST ACT

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise today to applaud the tremendous work that has been done over the course of this year to pass a bipartisan, 5-year, \$305 billion highway bill, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, known as the FAST Act. Transportation infrastructure is an essential part of the U.S. economy. It serves as the foundation to support our country's economic global competitiveness and connects communities, people, and markets.

Federal investment in transportation and other infrastructure has, unfortunately, lagged in recent decades, with public expenditures on infrastructure as a percentage of GDP steadily declining to its lowest levels in 20 years. I have consistently called for a highway bill that ensures steady and reliable funding for States so they can make long-term plans for improving our crumbling infrastructure. For too long, stopgap measures to prop up the highway trust fund for just a few months at a time have failed to provide the stability necessary to grow our economy.

The FAST Act comes at a critical time. This legislation will improve our Nation's infrastructure, make our Federal surface transportation programs work better for States, and address our Nation's infrastructure priorities by focusing on critical commerce corridors and emerging freight corridors as well.

The FAST Act also makes key investments in something I am very passionate about, and that is the future of mobility in the United States. Today, the auto industry is working hand in hand with tech, telecom, and software companies and their partners in academia and Federal agencies to collaborate and contribute to the transportation system of the future. This future will be dominated by connected and autonomous vehicles—on-demand services such as ride-sharing and car-sharing—and innovations in vehicle-to-infrastructure communications.

Vehicle-to-infrastructure communications technologies—known as V2I—have the potential to deliver incredible safety, mobility, environmental, and operational benefits to the driving public. For example, V2I technologies will allow bridges that are icing up to be able to communicate directly with an automobile before it gets to the bridge and, as a result, will prevent an accident before it even occurs. Today, stakeholders are working to develop and test V2I technologies, and widespread deployment is expected in the coming years.

We have to make sure the States are making plans for their future in V2I technologies. That is why I introduced

legislation earlier this year with Senators STABENOW and BLUNT that promotes investment in vehicle-to-infrastructure technology by authorizing States to use existing surface and highway transportation funding to invest in V2I projects as they upgrade their highway infrastructure. It is called the Vehicle-to-Infrastructure Safety Technology Investment Flexibility Act of 2015, and today I am proud to say this legislation passed as part of the FAST Act.

My vehicle-to-infrastructure provision and the broader bill's other major investments in research and development represent the type of forward-thinking policymaking on which Congress should be focused. By committing now to help usher in the future of mobility and by providing the funding and time to execute these programs, we have the ability to transform our society for the better.

The FAST Act also contains several provisions to improve rail safety in the United States. I am pleased that legislation I authored, in the wake of the devastating Amtrak No. 188 crash earlier this year in Philadelphia that unfortunately took the lives of 8 people and injured over 200, was included in the FAST Act. My provision requires the Department of Transportation, Amtrak, and the National Transportation Safety Board to conduct a post-accident assessment of the Amtrak No. 188 crash to determine if Amtrak followed its emergency preparedness and family assistance response plans and to determine if and how these plans can be improved for the future.

Finally, the FAST Act reauthorizes the Export-Import Bank. Since the beginning of July, the jobs supported by the Ex-Im Bank have been unnecessarily jeopardized. The Ex-Im Bank helps level the playing field for American companies in a tough global market. Last year it supported more than \$27.4 billion in U.S. exports and 164,000 jobs. More than \$10 billion of that total—nearly 40 percent—represented exports by small businesses, and 90 percent of its overall transactions directly supported small businesses, including many that serve as suppliers for large companies.

In Michigan, for example, the Ex-Im Bank has supported 229 exporter businesses selling \$11 billion worth of goods to places such as Saudi Arabia, Mexico, and Canada. This support is particularly important for our manufacturing industry, and the majority of Michigan exporters using Ex-Im Bank are manufacturers of motor vehicles and parts, machinery and chemicals—basically the backbone of Michigan's economy.

I am proud to see that with the FAST Act's passage, we can get back to the business of doing what makes sense for the economy and for jobs in America.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, while my colleague from Michigan is here,

let me say that we appreciate so much his participation in the commerce committee, especially the expertise he brings to the table with regard to all things automotive since, in fact, his State is the automotive State. He is a valued member of our commerce committee. I thank the Senator from Michigan.

FIGHTING ISIS

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, Americans are understandably frightened by the terrorist attacks in Paris and San Bernardino. As we mourn the loss of the victims, our hearts go out to their friends and families.

We were shocked 14 years ago, on September 11, when foreign terrorists struck our homeland. For the first time, two big oceans did not protect us from foreign terrorists. Now we know we have to be prepared to meet the threat not only abroad but here at home.

First, that means we have to see the threat clearly. It doesn't just come from shadowy foreign terrorist groups such as ISIS or Al Qaeda; now we see that it comes from a lone wolf or wolves, individuals who get radicalized. We saw that in the case at Fort Hood. We have seen it in other cases. We saw it in the case that was averted in Times Square, from someone who had come all the way across the country. They are extremely hard to detect.

Of course, ISIS uses the Internet to spread its propaganda, its influence, and to try to inspire disaffected young people with its propaganda far beyond where ISIS is located over in the Middle East. That means we have to use all the tools at our disposal to collect actionable intelligence, harden our defenses, counter radicalization, counter propaganda, and stiffen our resolve.

We ought to ensure that terrorists can't exploit the Visa Waiver Program. There are 38 countries with which we share this visa waiver. We ought to ensure that our law enforcement and intelligence agencies have the access they need to the terrorists' electronic communications to disrupt the attacks—that is a big order—all the while protecting Americans' privacy and constitutional rights.

That is why this Senator thinks it was a mistake to change the previous law, as we did earlier this year, which allowed telecom business bulk records to be readily accessed to trace terrorist communications. We have done this. We do not have the ready access of those bulk business records. Again, I remind our listeners we are not talking about the contents of communications—telephone calls or content of the Internet messages. We are talking about the bulk records which are business records that such and such a number or such and such an IP address on such and such a date transmitted a message to another number or another IP address.

In the past, through a court order, those bulk records were held by the

NSA, granting ready access so that if we were trying to stop a terrorist by getting intel ahead of time, we could go back and see where those communications were and with whom and how many hops it had gone in order to try to break up the terrorist activity. The problem with the lone wolf is that if they are disguising their operations, they are not communicating with anybody. That is why it makes it so much more difficult to intercept the lone wolf who has been inspired by ISIS.

Recently we saw that ISIS has claimed the responsibility for the bombing of a Russian airliner over Egypt, and it reminds us that our planes and airports remain a target for terror attacks. That is why I am introducing, and will explain tomorrow, legislation to tighten internal security at airports across the country. We had some good examples of that a year ago in Atlanta. Unbelievably, for several months, guns were brought into the Atlanta airport by airport workers, were transferred to a passenger who had already gone through TSA security, and they were actually transported over a number of months from Atlanta to New York. It is the lack of security on the perimeter of allowing workers into the airport proper that needs to be tightened up at all of our 300 airports. Two have already done that over the last several years, and I am very proud of the Miami airport and the Orlando airport that they have done it and done it very successfully.

Because ISIS exploits war in Syria and the instability and sectarian conflict in Iraq, meeting the terrorist threat means the use of military force as well. With the help of our coalition partners, as we speak, our forces are striking ISIS from the air and training local forces to fight ISIS on the ground. We are intensifying airstrikes against ISIS leadership, against heavy weapons, against oil tankers and oil wells, and have recently deployed U.S. Special Operations forces to help local forces build the necessary battlefield momentum to take back territory.

Special Operations forces will be central to the fight in order to avoid the large-scale deployment of U.S. ground forces. These forces are trained to conduct surgical strikes against terrorist leaders. There are press reports that GEN Joseph Votel, the current commander of the U.S. Special Operations Command, in the next year will become the next commander of Central Command, responsible for operations against ISIS. He already works side by side with General Austin—the commander of U.S. Central Command in Tampa at MacDill Air Force Base—and he will bring tremendous experience to the job.

The Congress is not doing our job. We should authorize the use of military force. It is our responsibility. I believe the President has the responsibility to fight ISIS in Iraq or Syria or wherever, but the unity of the Congress backing the President in law is constitutionally